

<https://lendedu.com/blog/safest-cities-state/>**This Memorial Day, Remember Captain Andrew Byers...**

This past November, we received the devastating news that former Clarence resident, Special Forces Army Captain Andrew Byers was killed in Afghanistan during a mission fighting Taliban forces. I believe he may be the first person from Clarence to be killed in action in America's War on Terror. I had the pleasure of knowing "Andy" and his family for many years, through Our Lady of Peace Church, and through his friendship as a classmate of my second born daughter, Chrissy.

I remember Andy as an "all-American kid." Even as a kid, it was clear that Andy was a special individual. He excelled in everything he did; sports, academics, school activities. He was a born leader. He had dreams early on of attending West Point Academy, which he made happen after graduating in 2004. Andy graduated from West Point in 2008, ranked 12th in his class. To be accepted to West Point was an honor in itself, but in typical Andy fashion, he excelled, he achieved, and he proved once again his born leadership.

After serving almost 10 years in the United States Army, after his graduation, he was on his third deployment, and was the commander of a Special Forces HALO team, which was among the elite High Altitude Low Opening units who often parachute in when carrying out their missions.

This particular mission, according to the NATO report, was meant to try to make the area in Afghanistan safer. I was told before he went on this mission, he told his mother, "I'll be fine. Don't worry. I promise to wear my helmet."

It makes me think about all the times I have heard from my own daughters a "don't worry", and "I'll be fine." Yet Rosemarie, Andy's mother, hears this as her son heads into combat.

It makes me appreciate the level of heroism, bravery, and sacrifice Andy gave for this country. Seeing my friends have to say goodbye to their son, and my daughter have to say goodbye to her dear friend brought this war, and the sacrifices all veterans have made, right in the heart of our town.

This Memorial Day, the American Legion will be paying special tribute to Captain Andrew Byers, as we honor and thank him for his ultimate sacrifice. Additionally, there will be a special dedication to Andy at the Senior Award Night on Monday, June 5th.

I have a simple request. Attend this Memorial Day Parade on Monday, starting at 11:00 am at the Clarence High School, ending at the Main Street Town Park. Make this the largest attended Memorial Day parade this town has ever seen to honor Andy, and thank him for his service. Attend for all the veterans that have made the ultimate sacrifice. Show the community what Clarence is all about. That we are a big family that supports each other, and are here for each other through good times, and sad times.

To "Captain Andrew Byers and all Veterans of the Armed Forces, Thank you!
God bless you, God Bless the Town of Clarence and God Bless the USA.